



New Year's Resolutions **To Make Life Better for Our Children**

At the beginning of a new year, as we're making resolutions to change things in our lives, we'd all do well to consider some suggestions from the American Academy of Pediatrics.

The AAP's list of **Tips for a Healthier New Year** is full of good advice on things we can do to make life safer for our children and to nurture their growth and development.

AAP doesn't leave the children out of making healthy changes, either. They also propose **20 Healthy New Years Resolutions for Kids**.

You can read these lists on the following pages. You will also find these and other resources on the web site of the American Academy of Pediatrics at www.aap.org

20 HEALTHY NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS FOR KIDS

The following New Year's tips are from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). Please feel free to use them in any print or broadcast story, with appropriate attribution of source.

Preschoolers

- I will clean up my toys.
- I will brush my teeth twice a day, wash my hands after going to the bathroom and before eating, and clean up my messes right away.
- I won't tease the family dog or even a friendly dog, and I will avoid being bitten by keeping my fingers and face away from his mouth.

School Age Kids

- I will drink milk and lots of it, and limit soda and fruit drinks.
- I will spend a couple of minutes every morning and afternoon applying sunscreen before I go outdoors, even in winter. I will try to stay in the shade whenever possible and wear a hat and sunglasses, especially when I'm playing sports.
- I will try to find a sport (like basketball or soccer) or an activity (like jumping rope, dancing, or riding my bike) that I like and do it at least three times a week!
- I will always wear protective gear--especially a helmet--when cycling, scooting or blading.
- I will wear my seat belt every time I get in a car. I'll use a booster seat until I can correctly use a lap/shoulder seat belt.
- I'll be nice to other kids. It's easier and more fun than being mean, and I'll feel better about myself.
- I'll never give out personal information such as my name, home address, school name, or telephone number in an Internet chat room or on an Internet bulletin board. Also, I'll never send a picture of myself to someone I chat with on the computer without my parent's permission.
- If I come across an unsupervised gun, or another child with a gun, I will not touch the gun and get help from a parent or trusted adult.

Teens

- I will eat at least one fruit and one vegetable every day, and I will limit the amount of soda I drink.
- I will take care of my body through sports, fitness and nutrition.
- I will choose non-violent television shows and video games, and I will only spend one to two hours each day-AT THE MOST-on these activities.
- I will check to see if I can give away any of my unwanted clothes and shoes to those in need.
- I will wipe negative "self talk" (i.e. "I can't do it" or "I'm so dumb") out of my vocabulary.
- Whenever I am feeling angry or stressed out, I will take a break and look for constructive ways to feel better, such as exercising, reading, writing in a journal, or talking out my problem with a parent or friend.
- When faced with a difficult decision I will talk to an adult about the options I may have.
- I will be smart about whom I choose to date.
- I will resist peer pressure to try drugs and alcohol.

TIPS FOR A HEALTHIER NEW YEAR

The following New Year's tips are from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). Please feel free to use them in any print or broadcast story, with appropriate attribution of source.

Prevent violence by setting good examples

Hitting, slapping and spanking teaches children that it is acceptable to hit other people to solve problems. Non-physical forms of discipline work better in the long run. Remember that words can hurt too.

Asking saves lives

ASK your neighbor if they have a gun before sending your kids over to play. If the answer is NO, that's one less thing you have to worry about.

If the answer is YES...you have to determine if your child's safety is at risk. Guns should be kept in a gun safe with the ammunition locked separately or they pose a real risk to your child. If you have any doubts about the safety of someone's home, you should politely invite the children to play at your house instead.

Make sure immunizations are up to date

Review your child's immunization record with your pediatrician. Make sure your child is current on recommended immunizations.

Provide your child with a tobacco-free environment

Indoor air pollution from tobacco increases ear infections, chest infections, and even Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. If you smoke, consider quitting. Remember, the most important predictor of whether your children will grow up to be smokers is whether you smoke. Make your home a smoke-free zone.

Read to your child every day

Start by the age of 6 months. Reading to children shows them the importance of communication and motivates them to become readers. It also provides a context to discuss issues and learn what is on your child's mind.

Practice "safety on wheels"

Make sure everyone in the car is buckled up for every ride, with children in the back seat in age-appropriate child safety seats. All bikers, skaters and skateboarders should wear helmets and other appropriate sports gear.

Do a "childproofing" survey of your home

A child's-eye view home survey should systematically go from room to room, removing all the "booby traps" that await the curious toddler or preschooler. Think of poisons, small objects, sharp edges, knives and firearms, and places to fall.

Monitor your children's "media"

Monitor what your children see and hear on television, in movies, and in music. Children are affected by what they see and hear, particularly in these times of violent images. Talk to your children about "content." If you feel that a movie or TV program is inappropriate, redirect your child to more suitable programming.

Help Kids Understand Tobacco, Alcohol, and the Media

Help your teenager understand the difference between the misleading messages in advertising and the truth about the dangers of using alcohol and tobacco products. Talk about ads with your child. Help your child understand the real messages being conveyed. Help direct your child toward TV shows and movies that do not glamorize the use of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs.

Pay attention to nutrition

Nutrition makes a big difference in how kids grow, develop and learn. Good nutrition is a matter of balance. Provide foods from several food groups at each meal. Emphasize foods that are less processed, such as whole grain breads and cereals and fresh fruits and vegetables. Review your child's diet with your pediatrician for suggestions.

Become more involved in your child's school and your child's education

Visit your child's school. Become active in the parent-teacher organization. Volunteer in the classroom or for special projects. Be available to help with homework. If your child's education is important to you, it will be important to him.

Make your children feel loved and important

Kids develop a sense of self-worth early in life. Listen to what your children have to say. Assure them that they are loved and safe. Celebrate their individuality, and tell them what makes them special and what you admire about them.

